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PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Project leaders are just as important to the success of a home demonstration program as are the officers of the groups.

But project leadership is a much different kind of a job than being a president or a secretary. Project leaders are responsible for subject matter. It is their job to help people better know about the subject and to get more families to adopt the recommended practices of the subject.

Oftentimes part of your job may be to actually teach or put on the project lesson or demonstration at local group meetings. This is a very worthwhile task, and a lot easier than you may think.

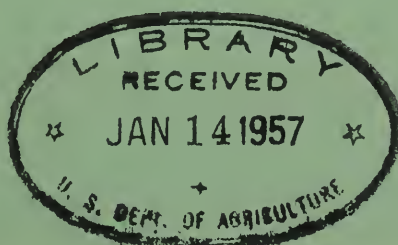
Sometimes a project leader is selected for the job because she is the only one who has a car available or who can spare the time to attend the necessary leader training meetings. On the other hand, you may be selected because your group wants to look to you for leadership in a particular project because you are interested in it and they have confidence that you can do it. I am quite sure that this is what your group and your home agent would first think about.

Sometimes a good person to select is one who needs and wants to learn more about a subject herself. Such a person would probably make a better project leader than one who is already the best cook or best seamstress or best chair upholsterer. The extra incentive of wanting it herself would cause her to do her best and also would be good for her own personal development. These things should be thought of in leadership selection. Another factor is acceptance and influence. Some persons may have more of this than you first think. People are best taught or influenced by persons who are like themselves. An organization has to think of this especially when it is interested in reaching or influencing special groups in the population.

Anyway, it is important to select the right leaders. Actually this may be anybody. We should not think of leadership jobs as being so exclusive that only certain persons can fill them. Anybody can be a project leader or an organization leader and everyone should have opportunities to do so, time and time again.

Here are some things that help to make putting on the project demonstration both easy and effective:

1. Plan your procedure for the meeting in advance and do it carefully. Check your plan with your extension agent or group president.
2. Have some teaching objectives or targets to shoot at, and stick to them. Work these out carefully.



3. Get some experiences of the group out on the floor. Find out what they do now about the subject and what they think is right or wrong. These create interest and help to build group support for the ideas that you want to teach. It also adds fun to the meeting and will make you less nervous.
4. Visualize your main items, if at all possible. If you do not have a blackboard, then use big sheets of newsprint and large crayons. Of course, demonstrate, when it fits the subject.
5. Teach only the main things, not everything.
6. Discuss reasons why this project and the ideas you want to teach about it are important.
7. Don't just read the lesson. Develop a teaching plan that also includes group participation and other devices.
8. Also, try to not just repeat what the agent or leader-trainer did. Think about what his or her main ideas were, and work out your own plan and words to put them across.
9. Believe in the subject yourself, first; then it will be easy to tell others.
10. Summarize the main ideas.
11. Have a little "personal commitment" session at the end. This means getting the folks to talk about what they are going to do about the subject when they go home.
12. Remember that people learn more by hearing an idea several times and by talking about it with others both in the meeting and later.

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